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ADANI GROUP, EMBRAER TO SET UP AIRCRAFT-MAKING FACILITY IN INDIA

Adani Group and Brazilian major Embraer on Tuesday announced a strategic tie-up to set up a regional aircraft manufacturing facility in India

ON THE ROAD TO MANUFACTURING HUB

Embraer makes commercial jets with up to 150 seats. Details about the investments and the location of the proposed facility were not disclosed. Civil Aviation Secretary Samir Kumar Sinha said the collaboration is not just about assembling a regional aircraft but also about technology transfer, skilling, supply chain and making India a manufacturing hub | P13

INDIA WILL NEED 500 AIRCRAFT IN 20 YEARS

- The Indian market is expected to require at least 500 aircraft in the 80 to 146 seat range over the next 20 years, Embraer said on Tuesday
- The venture with the Adani Group will be a major fillip for the Brazilian major in India's civil aviation space. Adani Defence & Aerospace President & CEO Ashish Rajvanshi called it a "watershed"

50

AIRCRAFT FROM EMBRAER'S STABLE IN SERVICE CURRENTLY IN INDIA

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

TEXTILE SECTOR

Big boost for exporters to take on competition

The textile sector could be the biggest winner as the FTA will correct the tariff disadvantage faced by exporters against Bangladesh, Pakistan & Turkey in the 27-nation bloc | P13

EUROPEAN CARS

Cheaper imported cars but conditions apply

Prices of imported cars are likely to come down after India agreed to cut duty to 10% for 2.5 lakh vehicles a year. However, no price cut for brands that already have plants in India | P13

MOBILITY PACT

Indian professionals, students to benefit

The mobility pact will open up opportunities for students and professionals in EU by streamlining migration, skilling, and easing movement of skilled workers | P13

CARBON TAX

No EU relief on carbon tax as CBAM stays

The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism—a key sticking point during talks—has been kept out of the FTA. India has secured a forward-looking most-favoured-nation assurance from EU | P13

INDO-PACIFIC

Mega defence and security pact inked

India and EU on Tuesday sealed a defence pact that will provide for counter-terror cooperation, deeper engagement in the Indo-Pacific, and joint development of military hardware | P9

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with European Council President Antonio Costa (left) and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen | PTI

WE DID IT!

INDIA AND EUROPEAN UNION ANNOUNCE LANDMARK FREE TRADE AGREEMENT; 99% OF INDIA'S EXPORTS TO GET DUTY-FREE ACCESS TO 27 EUROPEAN NATIONS

PUSHPITA DEY @ New Delhi

INDIA and the European Union (EU) on Tuesday announced the landmark free trade agreement (FTA), paving the way for duty-free access for 99% of Indian exports to the lucrative 27-nation European market. In return, India has offered significant market access to EU goods.

The FTA is expected to provide relief to India's labour-intensive sectors that have been under pressure due to US tariffs. With negotiations concluded, the agreement is likely to be signed later this year, the commerce ministry said.

Calling it India's largest FTA to date, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the pact would deliver substantial benefits for the country's 1.4 billion people. "The historic agreement will make access to European markets easier for our farmers and small industries, create new opportunities in manufacturing, and further strengthen cooperation between our services sectors," Modi said.

India will gain preferential access to the European market across 97% of tariff lines, covering 99.5% of trade value. Key labour-intensive sectors—textiles, apparel, marine products, leather, footwear, chemicals, plastics & rubber, sports goods, toys, and gems & jewellery—accounting for $33 billion in exports will see import duties ranging between 4% and 26% eliminated from the date the agreement comes into force.

The government has clarified that safeguards have been built in to protect sensitive sectors such as dairy, cereals, poultry, soymeal, and certain fruits and vegetables.

According to the European Commission, the pact will phase out high tariffs on select EU agri-food exports such as olive oil, processed foods, sheep meat, beverages and fruits, while India's sensitive agricultural sectors remain protected. EU sanitary and food safety standards will remain intact, with no exemptions for Indian exports.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal described the pact as balanced and equitable. "By leaving sensitive issues aside, we have arrived at a fair and win-win free trade agreement for industries in both India and the EU. It opens up a plethora of opportunities for investment and access to complementary markets," he said.

Among the biggest beneficiaries is the textile sector. Goyal estimated that India's textile exports to the EU could surge from $7 billion to $35 billion, generating 7 million new jobs.

Meanwhile, India will liberalise 92.1% of its tariff lines, covering 97.5% of EU exports by value. India will sharply cut some of its highest import duties, bringing car tariffs down from as much as 110% to as low as 10%, halving levies on European wines from 150% and eventually reducing it to 20%, and eliminating duties of up to 44% on machinery.

The two sides also announced a security and defence partnership and a broader strategic agenda, as Europe looks to reduce its reliance on the US and China. The partnership aims to deepen cooperation and improve defence interoperability.

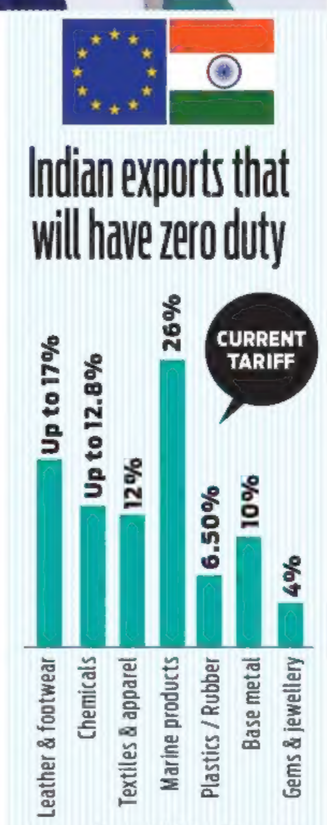
"Today, the world's two largest democracies launched a Security and Defence Partnership—a platform for stronger cooperation on strategic issues that matter most, from defence industry to maritime security," said European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

This agreement will facilitate easier access for our farmers and small enterprises to European markets, create new opportunities in manufacturing, and strengthen cooperation across services sectors

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

This is the tale of two giants... who choose partnership in a true win-win fashion, a strong message that cooperation is the best answer to global challenges

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen



Lower duty for imports from EU

Cars	Duty to drop from 110% to 10%
Premium wines	From 150% to 20%
Spirits	From 150% to 40%
Beer	Duty reduces from 110% to 50%
Olive oil	From 45% to 0%
Pharmaceuticals	From 11% to 0%
Aircraft and spacecraft	From 11% to 0%

Source: European Commission

'No G RAM G Act rollback': Oppn demand rejected

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

THE government on Tuesday rejected the Opposition's demand for discussions on the VB-G RAM G Act in the Budget session of Parliament beginning Wednesday, with Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju saying that there will be "no reversing the gear once the law is before the country". The minister also ruled out discussion on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter rolls, asserting that both the issues had already been debated by both Houses.

Rijiju made these remarks after an all-party meeting convened by the government. During the meeting, Opposition members, including the Congress' Jairam Ramesh and John Brittas of the CPI(M), also objected to the non-circulation of government business for the session, which the minister said would be done in due course. The Opposition demanded structured discussion on a range of issues, including the restoration of the UPA-era MGNREGA, the ongoing SIR, India's foreign policy, and the controversy over new UGC guidelines.

Budget focus

Speaking to the media, Rijiju said that as per parliamentary rules, discussions during the Budget session should primarily revolve around the Budget

The government, however, maintained that the primary focus of the Budget session would be the Budget itself, and said members could raise other issues during the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address.

On the Opposition's contentions on the VB-G RAM G bill, which was passed by Parliament during the Winter Session, the minister said, "Once a law is before the nation, we have to follow it."

While the government suggested that members can discuss the issues during the Motion of Thanks, Brittas objected, insisting on structured discussions that would allow replies from concerned ministers. He argued that discussions during the Motion of Thanks are limited and do not meet the demand for detailed debate.

Several Opposition MPs from the DMK, Trinamool Congress (TMC), and Left parties demanded a detailed discussion on the SIR, particularly in poll-bound states. Rijiju, however, ruled out another debate on the issue, saying it had already been discussed extensively during earlier debates on election reforms in both Houses. "If they seek another discussion, it will be uncalled," he told reporters.

Sources said several members also raised concerns over the UGC's new regulations aimed at addressing caste-based discrimination in higher education institutions. Speaking to the media, Azad Samaj Party (Kanshiram) president and MP Chandrashekhar Azad defended the new guidelines, saying they were framed in response to rising incidents of discrimination.

EXPRESS READ

CM loses cool as Cong workers chant 'DK, DK'

Bengaluru: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday lost his cool as party workers chanted "DK, DK", hailing DCM DK Shivakumar, just before he could begin his address at a Congress protest against the VB-G RAM G. He asked the workers to sit down, but when the chants grew louder, he asked angrily, "Who are those shouting DK, DK?" | P4

Infosys tightens work-from-home policy

Bengaluru: IT major Infosys has made its work-from-home policy stricter, similar to steps already taken by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Wipro, according to reports. The company has set a limit on extra work-from-home days. Employees can now take a maximum of five extra remote days in a quarter | P7

SC for attaching assets of acid attack convicts

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Tuesday sought "extraordinary" punitive measures for convicts in acid attack cases, asked the Centre to consider amending the law to strictly deal with them on the lines of dowry death matters where the onus of proving innocence lies on the accused.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices R Mahadevan and Joymalya Bagchi, while hearing a PIL filed by acid attack survivor Shaheen Malik, from Haryana, seeking recognition and statutory protection for victims, asked states and Union Territories to provide information about the number of acid attack cases in which charge sheets were filed in trial courts.

"Why assets of acid attack accused persons should not be attached? If a person is found guilty of acid attack, why all his immoveable assets be not acquired and used to compensate victim? You have to take some extraordinary punitive measures. Unless action is so painful, deterrent theory must be followed here," the bench observed.

In this particular case, the survivor's lawyer submitted that all the accused in the survivor's case have been acquitted and she was forced to file a criminal appeal.

The top court also asked all states and Union territories to provide a slew of information, including the year-wise details of the number of acid attack cases, their status in courts, besides the rehabilitation measures to support the victims.

The bench asked high courts to consider expediting and concluding matters concerning acid attacks in a time-bound manner on an out-of-turn basis. "All State Legal Services Authorities are to submit schemes, implemented for compensation or medical aid to the victims of acid attacks," the bench said.

DHONI

BEGINS PREPARATIONS FOR IPL IN RANCHI

With a few SS bats delivered to him as per his liking, ex-India and CSK captain started net sessions at the JSCA Sports Complex ahead of the 2026 edition | P15

Netas from all parties behind sand mining: Dr G

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

HOME Minister G Parameshwara admitted in the Assembly on Tuesday that many big people from across political parties are involved in illegal sand mining, but he expressed his helplessness in curbing the menace. "Illegal sand mining is a big racket. I am not giving any explanation or naming anyone, as it is a little embarrassing. I have given only a restricted answer, but it involves many influential people. I will call a meeting to discuss the issue," he said.

Devadurga JDS MLA Karemma raised the issue during the question hour. "There have been many cases of illegal sand mining, matka, gambling and thefts in Raichur district. Sand is mined from the Krishna river basin continuously at night. Farmers complain that because of sand mining, dust settles on their crop and damages it. The special task force has remained only in name. There are no CCTV cameras or registries at checkposts to monitor the movement of these vehicles, which have caused many deaths on the road." P6

All GPs to be named after Mahatma: CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday said all gram panchayats across Karnataka will be named after Mahatma Gandhi, and it will be announced in the upcoming state budget.

Addressing party workers at the 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGA) Bachao Sangram' and ahead of the 'Lok Bhavan Chalo', at Freedom Park, he said the Centre replacing Viksit Bharat - Gram Rozgar Ajeevika Mission - Guarantee (VB-G RAM G) with MNREGA is unconstitutional and an attack on the poor.

"Under MNREGA, each gram panchayat used to get Rs 1 crore annually, and the poor, especially women, were assured of 100 days of work in a year. But this has been taken away," he said and added that the Centre's move is at the behest of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). P4

MOVING ON

Not Rihaa, but Arijit retires from playback singing

HARSH B H @ Mumbai

NATIONAL award-winning singer Arijit Singh on Tuesday shocked fans the world over by announcing his retirement from playback singing in a series of posts on social media.

Thanking his fans for giving him love for 15 years, Arijit wrote, "I am happy to announce that I am not gonna be taking any new assignments as a playback vocalist from now on. I am calling it off. It was a wonderful journey. There are several reasons behind this. I have been trying to do this for a long time, but finally got the right courage. I got bored. I need to do some other music to live."

The renowned singer, however, did clarify that he will continue to be active as a musician. "Just to be clear, I won't stop making music. God has been really kind to me. I am a fan of good music and in future will be learning more and doing more on my own as a small little artist. Thanks again for all your support," he stated.

Music lovers and the industry continue to speculate on the reasons behind this drastic and one-of-a-kind step from Arijit, who has been one of the most active and prolific playback singers in the industry. According to sources, he had been having some conflicts with music labels over several issues, including royalty and copyright.

Arijit was one of the few film artists who were vocal on several issues. The singer famously had a fallout with Salman Khan after he remarked on the actor's hosting at an award show. For many years, Arijit did not give playback vocals for Salman, breaking the streak only with *Tiger 3* in 2023.

Arijit has constantly found himself in the Top 10 list of top global artists on popular music streaming platforms, and it is expected that his independent music career might finally give the Indian indie music scene a much-needed fillip.